

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESS

FOR RELEASE APRIL 14, 1937.

Efforts are being made by the Department of the Interior to extend a helping hand to America's bighorn or mountain sheep, one of the most picturesque of our native animals. Owing to elimination from large areas of its ancestral range and other adverse conditions, the bighorn is generally on the decrease throughout the United States.

Even the national parks at present are not exempt from this general statement, but biologists of the National Park Service are making investigations of causes and effect, with the hope that the serious situation may be remedied in those areas.

It will be remembered that somewhat over three decades ago when the buffalo was facing extinction, the Yellowstone herd, augmented by new animals from Texas, was brought back to such a thriving condition that for many years now it has been a source of supply for animals for other national parks, both in this country and in Canada, and for zoological gardens, municipal parks, private preserves, and even for restocking Indian reservations. And but recently the trumpeter swan, fast disappearing, seems to have been given a new lease on life in Yellowstone National Park and the adjoining region. Whether or not equal success can be obtained in the case of the mountain sheep, only the future can tell.

At present the bighorn population of Yellowstone National Park is stationary, but in Glacier and Rocky Mountain National Parks the sheep definitely are on the decrease. A survey of the Mount Whitney region, in and adjacent to

Sequoia National Park, made in the fall of 1935 by Joseph S. Dixon, mammalogist of the National Park Service, indicated that hardly more than half a dozen bighorn exist there.

A particularly serious problem exists in the Death Valley National Monument, where poachers have taken serious toll of mountain sheep. Actual studies in the field are being made by the National Park Service in order to plan methods of improving the status of bighorn in this and other park areas.

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